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"My heart, we 'll toil no more in sadness."

The Song of My Brook

By

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THE SONG OF MY BROOK

IT is born in the hills—

And steals gently along

With murmur of song

Where the trees bend low

To meet its flow,

Then gently, gently begins to sing

With cooing soft, like some human thing—

Then columbines lean thro' the tasselled grass

To whisper soft words as the brown waters pass ;

And the tender wild things of the wood are
there—

Soft mosses and daintiest maidenhair,

Trailing arbutus, with strawberry-vine—

All nestling close by this brook of mine ;

All the mysteries subtle, and sweet, and rare,

Of the summer woods and the summer air,

All the secrets of cunningly-folded ferns

And of downy willow-buds it learns :

All the forest-music that haunts the night,
All the voices of birds that wake with the
light,
All the sights, and the sounds, and the odors of
spring,
All the joy and the gladness of everything,
With the glory and light of heaven above—
All these my brook brings me—my brook
that I love!

The pines and the hemlocks, the beeches and firs
All talk to my brook, till it murmurs and purrs
With a gentle content, like a happy child
That saunters through glade and forest wild,
And croons, as she goes, some tender strain
That tells all the tale of the woods again ;
So my brook ripples and wanders away,
Singing forever a simple lay
Of worn old rocks, all gray and brown,
With the clinging lichen about them grown ;



*" With a quick sigh of love for the
wild woodland home,
It trembles far back on the white,
rushing foam."*

Of mossy banks where blue violets hide,
And bright holly waits for Christmas-tide ;
Of noisy babble, of murmurings sweet,
Of shaded nooks where young lovers meet ;
Of the children's laughter and children's
 woes,
Of all sweet, wild songs no poet knows ;
So living the life she was meant to live,
And giving the love she was meant to give,
 Laugh and song around her way,
 Beauty in all the shining day,
Grace and joy in everything,
What could this little brook do but sing ?
 With her song growing sweeter day by day,
 The pretty brook runs from the hills alway,
Till she comes to the brink of the river, where
A leap she must make thro' the quivering air.
 The free life is over, its loveliness past,
 The gay brook must go to the ocean at last !



*" So my brook ripples and wanders away,
Singing forever a simple lay."*

But think you she falters or lingers in fear ?

Ah, no, tho' she *perish*, the *pathway* is here !

With a quick sigh of love for the wild wood-
land home,—

It trembles far back on the white, rushing
foam—

Oh, brave little brook ! she gains a new strength,
And with full organ-peal, that goes back all the
length

Of her bright, loving life, with its gatherings
sweet,

All joyous, all gleaming, she springs forth to
meet

The swift rush of the river that flows at our
feet !

'T is no river of Death—it's the true life at
last—

For the day's duty's done, the day's ministry past.

That's the brook's story. I heard it all
In the music that's in my waterfall !

FROST AND COLD

My waterfall is still to-day—
Only a gentle murmur tells
That under the crystal roof still dwells
 The brook that comes from the hills away.
Only last night I was charmed to sleep
By the music ringing clear and deep
 From the shining drops that broke and fell
 Through the moonlit air, and none may tell
Nor voices sing that glorious song.
Far back the rocky way along
The hurrying waters seem to throng,
 Then, leaping, tumbling, foaming, came,
 Eager, triumphant, all to claim
Voice in that wondrous, wondrous rush
 Of harmony—

I listened till all my soul was filled
With rapture born of a grief that was stilled



*" All joyous, all gleaming, she springs
forth to meet
The swift rush of the river that
flows at our feet!"*

By those wonderful tones. They filled all
the night,
The hills and the woods and the sweet
moonlight,
Till my eyes were wet with blessed tears,
And my heart grew light of its weary cares.

I looked this morning, and all was white—
The frost and cold had come in the night ;
Rhythm, cadences—all were gone—
A white, still harmony reigned alone ;
Only a sweet and muffled hum
Down under the ice—it seems to come
Like a sad miserere, chanted low,
As one sings to himself, softly and slow.

But no cry for pity, no sob of pain
Comes from my brook ; it 's the old soft strain
Of the maiden's crooning, and now, as then,
It brings the sweet breath of the pines again.



*" The pretty brook runs from the hills
alway,
Till it comes to the brink of the river, where
A leap it must make thro' the quivering air."*

With the same glad tone it ripples and sings—
Singing forever of happy things—
And still it is cheery and loving and bright,
Though under the chain that was bound last
night.

Then I bent my head, ashamed, and said,
“And I must mourn when hopes are dead—
Must sob, and weep, and make sad moan—
Cry out and say that life is done!
My heart, we'll toil no more in sadness
But sing, like the brook, with joy and gladness.”



The Rocks.

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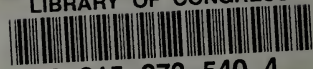


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